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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

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FOR

EDEN BRIDGE FAS BANK STABILIZATION

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MONTANA
FISH ,WILDLIFE & PARKS

NOVEMBER 1999

MEPA/NEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of Proposed State Action** Install Rip Rap Along Bank of Eden Bridge Floater Access Site on the Smith River

2. **Agency Authority for the Proposed Action** The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted statute 87-1-605, which directs Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) to acquire, develop and operate a system of fishing accesses. The legislature established an earmarked funding account to ensure that this function would be accomplished.

3. **Name of Project** Eden Bridge Floater Access Bank Stabilization

4. **Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)**

   MFWP sponsored

5. **If Applicable:**

   Estimated Construction/Commencement Date January, 2000
   Estimated Completion Date February, 2000
   Current Status of Project Design (% complete) 75%

6. **Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)**

   Eden Bridge is accessed from Highway 330, approximately 15 miles south of Ulm, Montana; Cascade County, Township 17 North, Range 3 East, Sections 7 and 8. Total site acreage = 4.47acres.

7. **Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

   (a) Developed:
   residential . . . . __ acres
   industrial . . . . __ acres

   (b) Open Space/Woodlands/
   Recreation. . approx. 1 acres

   © Wetlands/Riparian
   Areas . . . . <1 acres

   (d) Floodplain . . . . __ acres

   (e) Productive:
   irrigated cropland . . . . __ acres
   dry cropland . . . . __ acres
   forestry . . . . __ acres
   rangeland . . . . __ acres
   other . . . . __ acres

8. **Map/site plan: attach an original 8 ½" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.**

Please refer to Appendices 2 and 3, attached.

9. **Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action.**

The Eden Bridge Floater Access, at the lower end of Smith River State Park Program, received over 4100 floaters in 1999. This is the main take-out for the Smith River float trip which starts at Camp Baker Floater Access and is a permit-only float. In the peak floating season, 70 to 80 vehicles, some with boat trailers, may be parked at this site, providing transportation for those enjoying the several day State Park Program float.

Hydrologist, Peter Skidmore, visited the site with George Liknes, MFWP Fisheries Biologist, in January, 1999. He reported that the Smith River "appears to be trending toward development of a meander loop towards the left bank, where the erosion is occurring" at Eden Bridge. The opposite, or right bank has willows established, which is an indicator of a developing meander loop. The right bank also has rip rap installed slightly downstream from Eden Bridge. Skidmore indicated that it is difficult to determine if armoring of the bridge piers just downstream from the Floater Access is partly responsible for the upstream erosion.

The erosion at Eden Bridge Floater Access became extremely obvious during the high water season of 1997 when approximately 10 feet of bank was washed away for a length of about 60 feet, thus reducing the parking area. It is highly likely that erosion of this bank and the Floater Access will continue unless the bank is armored in some way. The parking area is a risk, as well as the latrine and boater take-out area.

MFWP personnel and Skidmore discussed the opportunity to install a rock toe in a key trench to at least the depth of scour, and up to an elevation equivalent to the lower limit of vegetation. Based on this discussion, it is proposed that approximately 800 yards of dirt will be excavated to provide about a 2:1 bank slope and toe trench. Approximately 400 yards of Class I and II rip rap will be installed in a two foot deep trench that is four feet wide at the base of the eroding bank, and extend rip rap four feet up the bank. An erosion blanket will be installed at the crest of the bank and seeded with native grasses and willow shoots.

A trac hoe will be used to prepare the bank and place the rip rap. Some excavation will occur in the water, however the equipment will remain stationed on the bank, out of the stream. Nearly the entire bank of the Floater Access between the boater take-out and Highway 330 to the southwest (upstream) will be treated, approximately 592 feet. Much of the vegetation along the bank has been washed away, though some cottonwoods (up to two feet in diameter), choke cherries and box elder trees will be affected by the project.

The proposed work will not effect floaters taking out at Eden Bridge. The proposed work would be completed by a private contractor overseen by MFWP and complying with state guidelines.

10. **Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.**

(a) **Permits:**

Agency Name	Permit	Date Filed/#
Corps of Engineers	404	2-3 weeks prior to construction
MFWP	124	2-3 weeks prior to construction
Water Quality Bureau	3A	2-3 weeks prior to construction
Cascade Co. Weed Board	Weed Permit	2-3 weeks prior to construction

(b) **Funding:**

Agency Name	Funding Amount
MFWP-State Parks Earned Revenue (Cultural/Historic Capital Program)	$20,000

© **Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:**

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility
State Historic Preservation Office	Cultural Resources Protection

11. **List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:**

MFWP - Parks Division
    Design and Construction Bureau
    Wildlife Division
    Fisheries Division

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
▸ a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?			X			1a.
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		yes	1b.
▸ c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				1c.
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?			X		yes	1d.
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other ___N/A____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1a. The current bank is eroding due to river action. The proposed rip rap installation is intended to harden this bank, thus reducing or eliminating the possible loss of soil and instability of the bank.

1b. Approximately 800 yards of river bank soil will be excavated and wasted (on site) over about one acre of agricultural land no longer hayed. Productivity of this land will be temporarily impacted due to over-covering, until vegetative species re-establish. The wasted soil is fertile and this area will be seeded with native grasses when construction is complete to hasten productivity of wildlife cover and forage. Excavating equipment, front end loaders and dump trucks will be working on the river bank, thus causing compaction and disruption of soils and vegetation for a width of about 40 feet from the river bank. A trail will be compacted between the river bank and the defunct agricultural land to dispose of the excavated soil. Construction will occur in the winter months, which will help to limit the affects on soils and vegetation.

1c. No unique geologic or physical features will be altered due to this project.

1d. Temporary amounts of deposition and erosion will occur due to excavation proposed for the project. The purpose of the project is to stop long term and large volumes of erosion occurring along the Smith River at Eden Bridge Floater Access. Siltation, deposition and erosion patterns of the last few years at the site will be purposefully altered. The rip rap bank is not expected to significantly alter river actions upstream or downstream. The bridge piers downstream are already armored with rip rap, as well as the opposite bank. The technique for installing the rip rap in a key trench will reduce the chance of future erosion problems. If the proposed project is not implemented, this bank material would likely be eroded by natural river action in the next several years and deposited downstream.

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. AIR Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT✲				Can Impact Be Mitigated✲	Comment Index
	Unknown✲	None	Minor✲	Potentially Significant		
▸ a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))			X		yes	2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e.♦For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)		N/A				
f. Other N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

2a. Minor and temporary amounts of dust may be created due to the excavation of approximately 800 yards of bank material. These levels are expected to be very low since construction will take place in months which are typically moist due to snow or rain and part of the excavation will be in the river.

✲ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

3. WATER	IMPACT✪				Can Impact Be Mitigated✪	Comment Index
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown✪	None	Minor✪	Potentially Significant		
▸ a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X		yes	3a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
I. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		N/A				
m. ♦For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		N/A				
n. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3a. The proposed project will cause temporary and minor amounts of turbidity. Measures will be specified in the contract to mitigate the effect of the surface water quality, such as requiring equipment to work from the bank, rather than in the stream. Construction will take place during a period of naturally low river levels. A 3A permit will be attained if necessary from the Water Quality Bureau prior to construction.

Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT✪				Can Impact Be Mitigated✪	Comment Index
	Unknown✪	None	Minor✪	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		yes	4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				4d.
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		yes	4e.
f. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		N/A				
g. Other: ____N/A____						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4a. The river bank must be sloped to a two to one ratio to allow for secure placement of the rip rap. This will require removal of riparian vegetation such as native grasses, choke cherries, box elder trees, and cottonwood trees, all of which are abundant along the Smith River. The construction equipment will temporarily pack, disrupt or remove vegetation for a linear strip of 40 feet wide along the 592 foot shoreline. A trail will be compacted between the river bank and the defunct agricultural land to dispose of the excavated soil. Construction will occur in the winter months, which will help to limit the affects on dormant vegetation. MFWP requires contractors to limit impacts to the immediate area of construction. Approximately one acre of defunct agricultural land will be covered with the excess river bank soil. Disturbed areas will be seeded with native grasses (and willow shoots along the bank) after construction is complete.

4d. The agricultural land on site(approximately two acres, total) has not been hayed since MFWP purchased the property in 1994. About half of this agricultural tract will be covered with the river bank material excavated to provide the proper slope and toe key to install the rip rap.

4e. Areas disturbed during construction are prone to the establishment of noxious weeds. The site is already managed under the Regional Weed Management Plan to control the spread of leafy spurge. Native grass seed will be planted at the conclusion of the project to re-vegetate the site and reduce the establishment of noxious weed species. Weed control efforts will target disturbed areas until adequate ground cover has returned.

✪ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

▸ 5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?			X			5a
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?			X			5c.
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				5f.
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?			X			5g.
h. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		N/A				
I. ♦For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		N/A				
j. Other: N/A						

[illegible]rative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Wildlife biologist for the area, Jim Williams, stated that the Eden Bridge site provides little wildlife habitat due to the high human visitation and he would not expect any significant impacts to the area wildlife due to the proposed project. Increased turbidity levels will temporarily affect the fish habitat, however, the new rip rap will provide additional habitat supporting a variety of fish in this reach of the Smith River. Rainbows are the predominate game fish in the section, accompanied by brown trout and mountain whitefish.

5a. Brown trout are fall spawners, therefore turbidity caused by the proposed project may impact eggs in the gravels during construction. Fisheries biologist for the area, George Liknes, stated that Brown trout use the area but it's not known if they spawn in this specific area. Rainbow trout redds (a spring spawner) have been observed near the left bank in the immediate vicinity of the project area. Liknes also said that there are no known T&E fish species in the area he is aware of utilizing this area.

Removal of shoreline vegetation to produce a 2:1 slope for installation will slightly reduce habitat for few small wildlife.

5c. Few small, non-game species, such as song birds, mice, snake species, will be displaced due to the removal of shoreline vegetation.

5f. Wildlife biologist, Jim Williams, commented that bald eagles are seen along the Smith River, however they will not be affected by the proposed project.

5g. Use of large equipment (trac hoe, dump trucks) during the approximate 45 days of construction will temporarily stress area wildlife due to increased noise and activity.

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X			6a.
b. Exposure of people to servere or nuisance noise levels?			X		yes	6b.
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6a. Temporary increases in noise levels can be expected during the 45-day construction period due to heavy equipment use necessary to complete the proposed project.

6b. Visitation to the site is very low during November and December, when construction is planned to occur, therefore exposure of people to nuisance noise levels is expected to minimal.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?			X positive			7a.
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

7a. Erosion of the parking area occurring in the last several years has impacted the ability of the site to provide necessary parking at this popular floater take-out site. The proposed project is intended to limit further erosion and loss of parking space.

Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. ♦For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		N/A				
e. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				9d.
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X		yes	9e.
f. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9d. The proposed project will ensure that parking space is provided for commercial (and private) shuttle vehicles used for floaters on the Smith River. If erosion continues, the site users could potentially lose significant space for parking, boater take-out area and latrine.

9e. Use of equipment on the site will temporarily restrict parking and traffic flows, however, the construction will occur during a period of low visitation, thus the visitors that do use the site will have ample parking at other areas of the site.

Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

‣ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action:	IMPACT✪				Can Impact Be Mitigated✪	Comment Index
	Unknown✪	None	Minor✪	Potentially Significant		
a. Have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify: recreational facilities			X positive			10a.
b. Have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Result in increased used of any energy source?		X				
▸ e. Define projected revenue sources						10e.
▸ f. Define projected maintenance costs.						10f.
g. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10a. Current maintenance to the site due to the large amount of erosion occurring has been limited to moving the fence-line several [illegible]es. If the proposed project is *not* implemented and further erosion occurs, several costly impacts in future years will be more costly:

- ♦ the current parking area would require expansion,
- ♦ the latrine will need moving at a minimum, or may get destroyed if a flooding event occurs before it could be moved,
- ♦ the floater take-out/boat landing area may need annual grading, gravel, and maintenance.

10e. Revenue for the proposed project (approximately $20,000) will come from State Parks Earned Revenue - Cultural/Historic Capital Program.

10f. Due to the design of the project, future maintenance related to the armored bank should not be required.

✪ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

▸ 11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?			X		yes	11a.
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
▸c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)			X positive			11c.
d. ♦For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		N/A				
e. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

11a. The natural aesthetics of the river bank will be altered due to the removal of shoreline vegetation and installation of the rip rap for nearly 600 feet. This affect will be softened, however, with the use of natural, local materials and the seeding of natural grasses after construction is complete. Willows planted at the crest of the bank will also add to the aesthetics of the viewshed and hide the affects of construction from floaters passing on the river.

11c. The proposed project will ensure that the site is available for use for many years by river floaters, anglers and recreationalists. If the rip rap is not installed, the site may lose significant parking and facilities.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
▸a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?	X					12a.
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?	X					12a.
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? **Attach SHPO letter of clearance.** (Also see 12.a)	X					12a.
e. Other: N/A						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

12a. Eden Bridge Floater Access was surveyed for archeological sites in September, 1999. At the time of this writing, the results of that survey were not known. Before construction SHPO will be notified of survey results and request their concurrence.

Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT✪				Can Impact Be Mitigated✪	Comment Index
	Unknown✪	None	Minor✪	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. ♦For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		N/A				
g. ♦♦For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		N/A				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

▸ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

2. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

ALTERNATIVE A: No Action
The "no action" alternative will place the future of the Eden Bridge Floater Access in jeopardy. According to Hydrologist, Peter Skidmore, the river is attempting to develop a meander loop towards the left bank. This would infer that erosion on this bank will continue indefinitely or until a major water event changes the course of the river. This site served as a take-out for over 4100 floaters in 1999. The current parking area is often filled to capacity (approximately 80 cars with some trailers) in June, the height of the floating season. If the parking area continues to erode, this will limit parking space, cause major difficulties in traffic flow, and will not provide adequate facilities for the visiting pubic. The floater take-out area and latrine would also be at risk from future erosion.

ALTERNATIVE B: No Action on Bank; Expand Parking Area to the West
As discussed under Alternative A, the river is attempting to make a meander loop. This action will cause significant amounts of the Eden Bridge property to erode. If MFWP does not want to adopt an active bank stabilization plan, they could let the river act naturally. The Eden Bridge Floater Access consists of 4.47 acres, most of which is level, with approximately half of the property not actively used for recreational purposes. The affected parking area is a necessary facility at this site due to the number of floaters and the need for shuttle vehicles. It may be advantageous to expand the parking area westerly to the degree that parking space would be adequate for many years even if the current parking space was decreased by erosion. The disadvantage of this alternative is that the latrine and gravel boater take-out area will also be impacted by the future river action. Further replacement of facilities in the future could be more costly than the proposed action. The county road bridge is immediately downstream, and if erosion continues over several years, the road department may require rip rap to maintain the river's course under the bridge. This alternative regarding construction of an expanded parking area would be implemented by private contractor abiding by the standard MFWP requirements.

ALTERNATIVE C: Dump Class I and II Rip Rap on the Bank
"Alternative C" suggests that the rip rap be dumped on the bank, with little specific placement of individual rocks, or preparation of the bank slope. This alternative was discussed at the site visit with MFWP and County Commissioners as a way to reduce costs and achieve the desired armored bank. Water action, however, would erode pockets from the rock jumble, thus reducing the strength of the overall "wall" and eroding the bank at those holes. This is not considered a long term solution, but if implemented, a private contractor would haul the rock from the nearby highway improvement project, back the trucks and dump the rock down the edge of the bank. Contractors would follow standard MFWP requirements.

ALTERNATIVE D: Proposed Action - Place Class I & II Rip Rap in Key Trench
The proposed alternative carefully slopes the bank and prepares a key trench which helps secure the rock, even under constant river action. The large boulders are specifically placed in the trench and fitted together like a puzzle, which limits movement and the ability of the river to eat around the holdings. This alternative is more costly in the short term than Alternative C, but is perhaps less costly than having to repeat stabilization projects or losing significant real estate over the long term. This method of bank stabilization is a common technique for long term bank stabilization. This alternative would be implemented by private contractor complying with standard MFWP requirements.

3. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

Construction oversight by the Region 4 staff enables MFWP to more closely regulate the quality of the project and compliance with state and federal permits. The 3A Permit and 124 Permit requires that the contractor/agency maintains the highest water quality possible and that the local fisheries biologist approves of the project and it's timing.

Specific design of the proposed project allows for the greatest success in stabilizing the bank. In addition to the keyed rip rap, the crest of the bank will be seeded and overlaid with an erosion blanket to protect that soil from erosion while vegetation is establishing. In addition to grasses, willow shoots will be planted along the bank which grow quickly and will further stabilize the bank. These actions will be directed by fisheries biologist George Liknes, parks personnel, and MFWP Design and Construction guidelines. The areas immediately around the construction site and the excess material waste site will be seeded with native grasses to limit erosion and weed infestation.

Construction will take place in months when very few visitors use the park, therefore impacts such as noise and limited parking will be very minor.

The State Historic Preservation Office will be consulted prior to construction for their concurrence on the project.

4. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? YES / NO If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

This environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed action, therefore an EIS is not necessary and an Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis.

5. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

The public will be notified in the following manners to comment on the EA, the proposed action and alternatives:

- six legal notices; two notices published one week apart in each of these three newspapers: Great Falls Tribune, Helena Independent Record, Cascade Courier;
- one legal notice on Montana's electronic bulletin board;
- one statewide press release.

Copies of the EA will be mailed directly to the neighboring land owners to ensure their knowledge of the proposed action.

The opportunities for public input listed above are appropriate for the proposed action since the environmental impacts identified were minor and many could be mitigated.

6. Duration of comment period, if any.

The public will have thirty (30) days to comment following the publication of the second legal notice. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 pm, November 22, 1999 and can be mailed to the address below:

Eden Bridge Floater Access
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
4600 Giant Springs Road
PO Box 6610
Great Falls, MT 59406

7. Name, title, address and phone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:

Sue Dalbey	Joe O'Neill
Independent Consultant	Acting Smith River District Parks Manager
Dalbey Resources	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
926 N. Lamborn St.	4600 Giant Springs Road
Helena, MT 59601	PO Box 6610
406-443-8058	Great Falls, MT 59406
	406-454-5480

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The negative impacts from the proposed action are minor. Many impacts are temporary and can be mitigated to lessen their affects on the physical or human environment. The State Historical Preservation Office will be consulted prior to construction to ensure that no culturally significant sites will be impacted. The farmland that will be affected has not been used for that purpose since MFWP acquired the land. The proposed project will not significantly change the property if it is determined in the future that farming should occur on that tract again. The project will not effect floaters taking out.

The Eden Bridge Floater Access is in danger of losing significant amounts of real estate and facilities if the proposed action is not implemented. Other alternatives considered are short term solutions or more costly. The proposed action is an established method of stabilizing an active river bank. The Smith River State Park Program is an acclaimed floating/angler experience and receives a large number of visitors annually. The high visitation at Eden Bridge justifies the proposed action.

Appendices:

1. HB495 Qualification Checklist
2. Site Location Map (USGS)
3. Site Plan
4. Tourism Report
5. Schematic Drawing of Project

APPENDIX 1
HB495
PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

Date September 18, 1999 **Person Reviewing** Sue Dalbey, Independent Consultant

Project Location: Eden Bridge Floater Access unit of Smith River State Park; Cascade County, approximately 15 miles south of Ulm, MT on Highway 330; T17N, R3E, Sections 7 and 8; Total site acreage = 4.47 acres.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK: Stabilize approximately 592 feet of river bank using 400 yards of Class I & II rip rap installed on a 2:1 sloped bank with a key trench at the toe and extend four feet up the bank; bank crest seeded with grass, covered with erosion blanket, and planted with willow shoots; approximately 800 yards of excess bank soil wasted on site.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under HB 495 rules. (Please check ✔ all that apply and comment as necessary.) Capital Construction projects - prepared by D & C; Force Account projects - prepared by Region.

[✔] A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?
Comments: A temporary trail will be compacted to deposit excess material from bank to waste site.

[ ] B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
Comments: None

[✔] C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?
Comments: The river bank will be sloped to a 2:1 slope and a two foot deep key trench excavated at toe of bank creating approximately 800 yards of material that will be wasted on site.

[ ] D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?
Comments: None

[✔] E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?
Comments: Approximately 592 feet of river bank will be sloped 2:1 and rip rap installed to reduce erosion.

[✔] F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?
Comments: The proposed method of installing rip rap suggests excavating a two foot key trench at the base of the bank, in the river, to place the rip rap.

[ ] G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?
Comments: Unknown

[ ] H. Any new above ground utility lines?
Comments: None

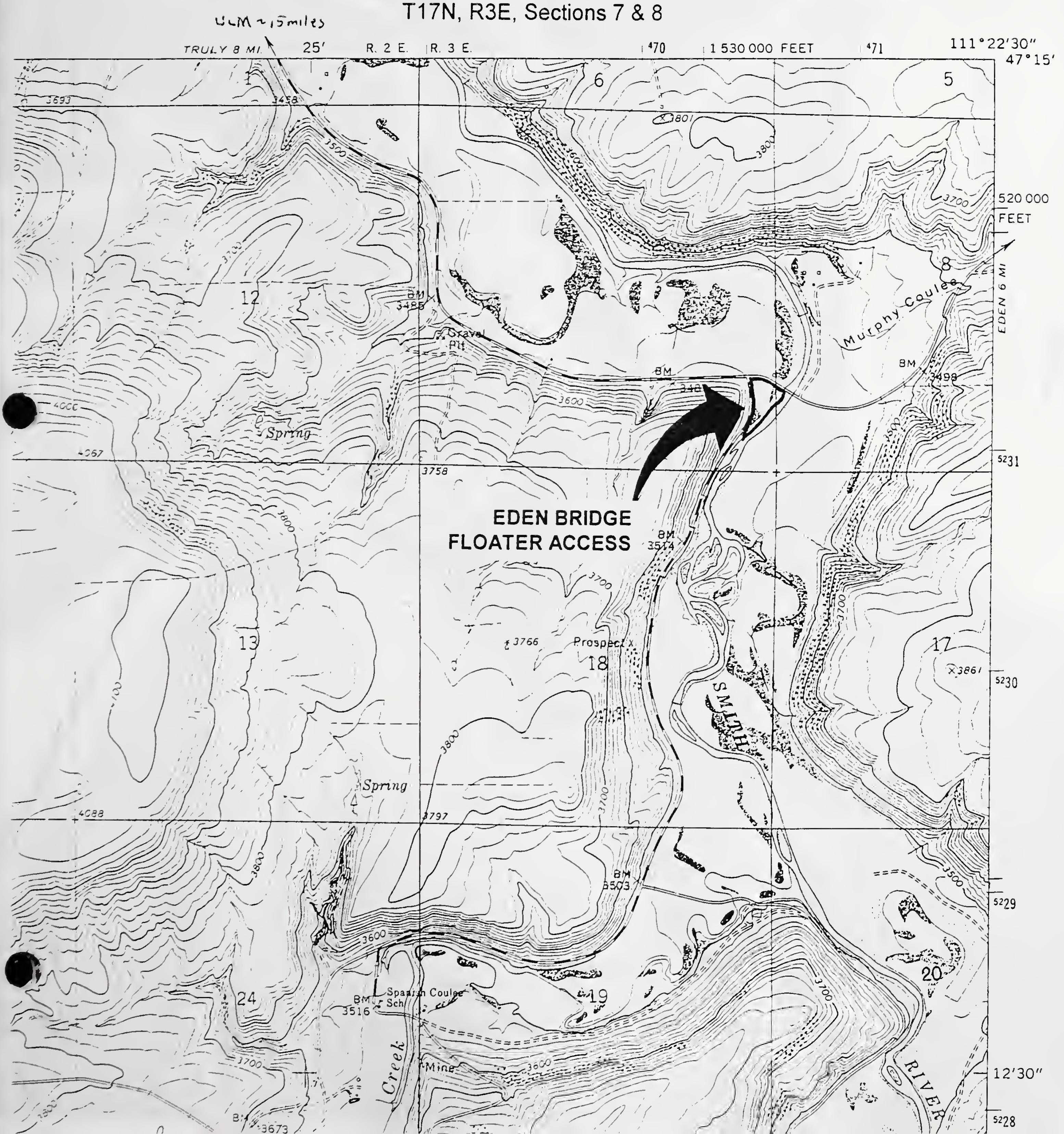
[ ] I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?
Comments: None

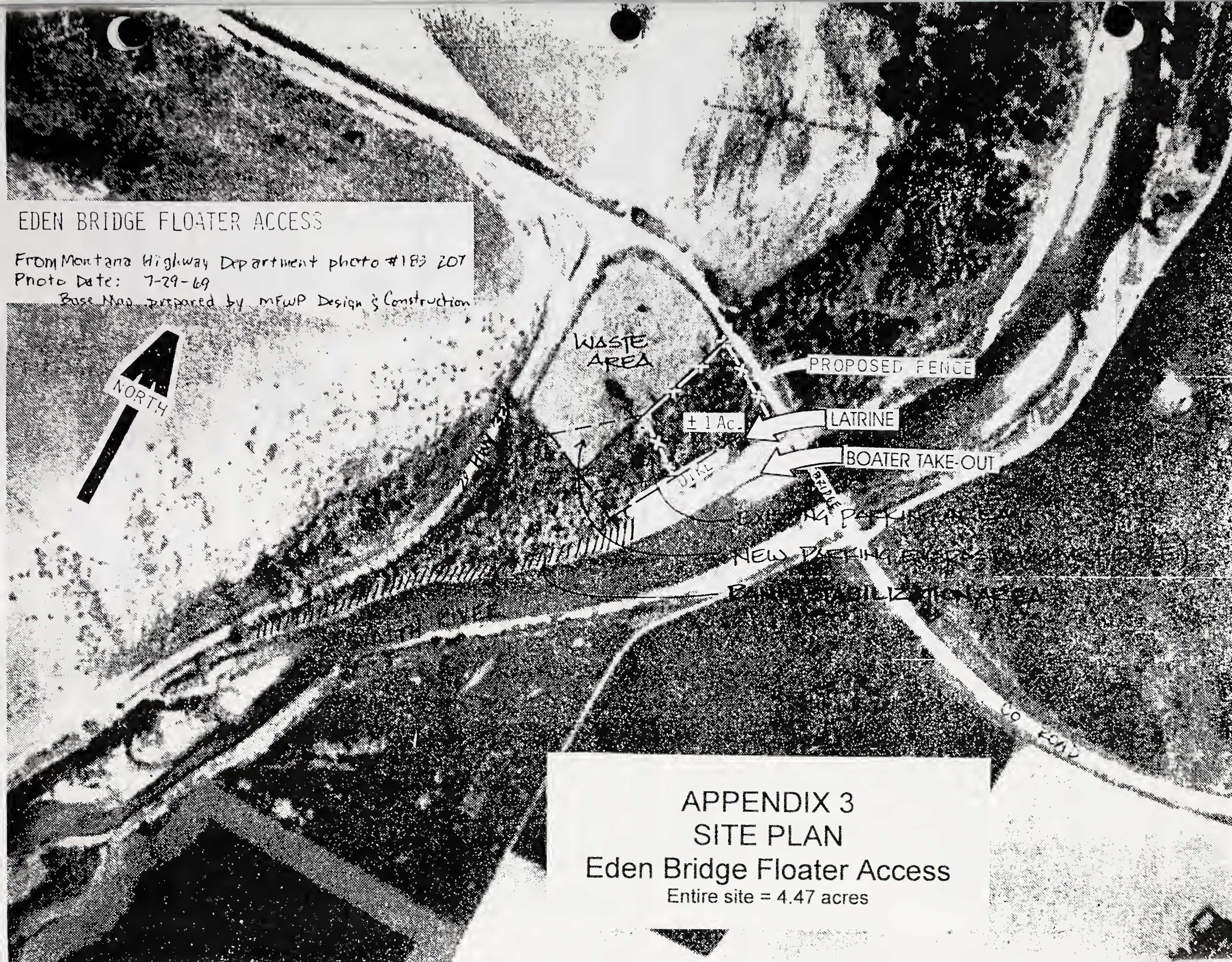
[ ] J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?
Comments: Use at the site will continue as it has in the past if the proposed project is implemented.

8/98sed **If any of the above are checked, HB 495 rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.**

APPENDIX 2
SITE LOCATION MAP
Eden Bridge Floater Access

Approximate property boundaries
Entire site = 4.47 acres
Spanish Coulee School Quadrangle
Cascade County, MT
7.5 minute, 1971 USGS
T17N, R3E, Sections 7 & 8





EDEN BRIDGE FLOATER ACCESS

From Montana Highway Department photo #183 207
Photo Date: 7-29-69
Base Map prepared by MFWP Design & Construction

APPENDIX 3
SITE PLAN
Eden Bridge Floater Access

Entire site = 4.47 acres

APPENDIX 4

MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA)/HB495 TOURISM REPORT

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by HB495 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Victor Bjornberg, Tourism Development Coordinator
Travel Montana-Department of Commerce
PO Box 200533
1424 9th Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-0533

Project Name: Eden Bridge Fishing Access Site Bank Stabilization

Project Description: Install rip rap along 592' of Smith River bank.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?
☒ NO ☐ YES If YES, briefly describe:

VB OK

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?
☒ NO ☐ YES If YES, briefly describe:

VB OK

Signature Victor A Bjornberg Date 9-21-99

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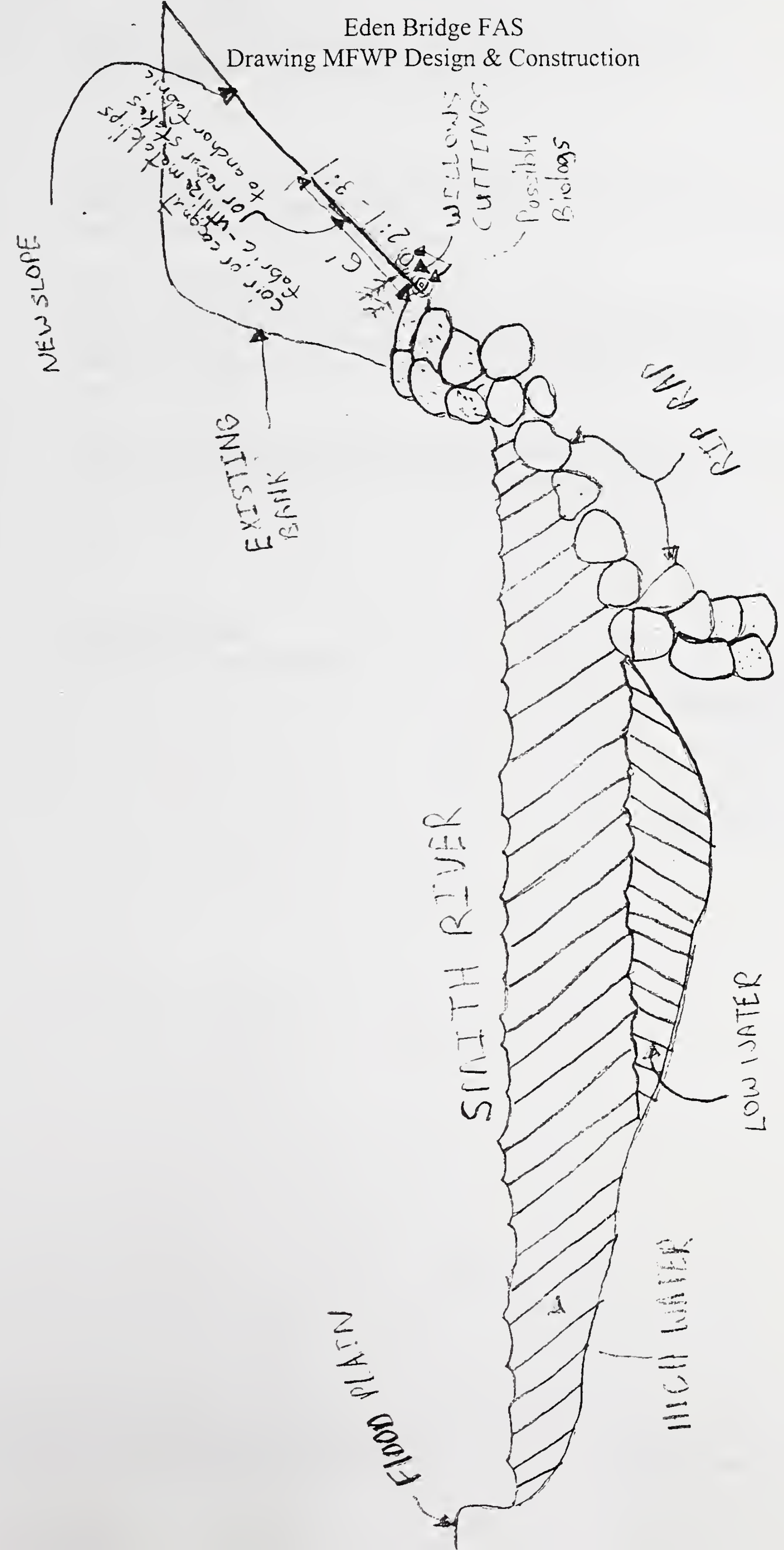
7/98sed

APPENDIX 5
SCHEMATIC DRAWING OF PROJECT

Eden Bridge FAS
Drawing MFWP Design & Construction



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Subject: Eden Bridge FAS
17N-3E-7 & 18

Date: September 17, 1999

To: Paul Valle, Landscape Architect/Cultural Resource Coordinator
FWP, Design and Construction Bureau

On September 19 I inventoried the above fishing access site. Visibility was poor because half the acreage is a gravel parking area and the remaining acres are densely vegetated with grass or trees.

Inventory consisted of examining the eroded banks along the western edge of the parcel. The Highway Department has bladed in drain ditches along the north and west edges of the parcel. This area of new disturbance was also examined for the presence of cultural material. Numerous rodent disturbances in the former agricultural field were checked.

No sites or cultural material were observed within the parcel. A formal report will be submitted at a later date. Please call if you have any questions.

DORI PASSMANN
Cultural Resource Specialist

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SEP 21 1999
DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION
DEPT. OF FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

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